

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 CU-02 SAM-01 SAJ-01 AID-05 SCCT-01

EB-07 FEA-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGR-05 /110 W

----- 008445

R 140955Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9570

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY BONN BY POUCH

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW BY POUCH

AMCONSUL MANDALAY BY POUCH

USLO PEKING BY POUCH

AMCONSUL UDORN BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1243

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BM

SUBJECT: JOINT WEEKA #17

1. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROTEST ALLEGED TORTURE (LOU)

FOLLOWING DETENTION, ALLEGED PHYSICAL MISTREATMENT AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE BY POLICE OF A DENTISTRY STUDENT MISTAKEN FOR A PICK-POCKET, SOME FIFTY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED IN FRONT OF THE HOME OF RANGOON MILITARY COMMANDER COL. AYE KO ON MAY 10 DEMANDING AN INVESTIGATION OF POLICE BRUTALITY. THROUGH AN INTER-MEDIARY, AYE KO REPORTEDLY PROMISED THE STUDENTS TO TAKE ACTION

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AND DEMONSTRATORS DISPERSED PEACEFULLY. BURMESE PRESS, WHILE NOT

REPORTING THE INCIDENT, CARRIED SUBSEQUENT REPORT THAT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE HAD ISSUED A DIRECTIVE PROHIBITING PHYSICAL MISTREATMENT OF SUSPECTS.

COMMENT: THE WILLINGNESS OF THE STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE, IN THE WAKE OF THE U THANT AFFAIR, IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. PERHAPS THEEVENTS OF DECEMBER HAVE INSTILLED A GREATER SENSE OF COHESIVENESS AMONG STUDENT BODY AND STUDENT PROTESTS OVER LEGITIMATE (NOT NECESSARILY POLITICAL) GRIEVANCES MAY BECOME MORE FREQUENT.

2. GRENADE ATTACK ON WEST GERMAN EMBASSY (CONFIDENTIAL)

A GRENADE WAS THROWN INTO COMPOUND OF THE FRG CHANCERY EVENING OF MAY 10, DAMAGING A WALL BUT CAUSING NO INJURIES. POLICE REPORT M-69 GRENADE WAS USED.

COMMENT: FRG CHARGE SPECULATES THAT PPP MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE DUE TO WEST GERMAN SUPPLY OF ARMS-MANUFACTURING EQUIPMENT TO GUB.

3. RELEASE OF KIDNAPPED TECHNICIAN (LOU)

INSURGENTS WHO HAD KIDNAPPED A WEST GERMAN AID TECHNICIAN RELEASED HIM MAY 7 IN NORTHERN SHAN STATE. HE IS REPORTEDLY IN GOOD HEALTH. NEITHER KIDNAPPING NOR RELEASE HAVE YET BEEN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED IN BURMA.

4. USSR V-E DAY RECEPTION (UNCLAS)

SOVIET EMB HOSTED RECEPTION MAY 8 CELEBRATING THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY OVER "HITLERITE FACISM". AFFAIR APPEARED WELL ATTENDED ON BURMESE SIDE, LESS SO FROM THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. FRG AND JAPANESE DID NOT ATTEND. RUSSIANS WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS (IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE) AND BY AND LARGE TACTFULLY AVOIDED DIRECT COMMENT WITH US EMBASSIES ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN INDOCHINA. V-E ANNIVERSARY WENT LARGELY UNNOTICED IN BURMESE PRESS.

5. DRV ASSUMES CUSTODY OF RVN CONSULATE GENERAL (UNCLAS)

ON MORNING OF MAY 13 REPRESENTATIVES OF GUB ASSISTED THE LOCAL DRV
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CONSUL GENERAL IN TAKING CUSTODY OF THE FORMER RVN CONSULATE GENERAL PREMISES. THE EVENT RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE BUT THERE WAS NO INDICATION WHETHER OR NOT RECOGNITION OF PRG WAS AT HAND.

GVN CONGEN PERSONNEL STILL IN RANGOON HAVE NOT BEEN INTERFERED WITH AND ARE BEING GIVEN TIME TO LEAVE COUNTRY. THEY HAD ADVANCE WARNING OF TAKEOVER AND DESTROYED FILES OTHER THAN ADMINISTRATIVE.

CONGEN HAD PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED FOREIGN MINISTRY OF CLOSURE OF OFFICE EFFECTIVE APRIL 30.

COMMENT: (LOU) ACCORDING TO A HIGH MFA OFFICIAL HANOI REQUESTED THE GUB TO TURN THE OLD RVN PREMISES OVER TO DRV FOR CUSTODY UNTIL PRG REPRESENTATIVES COULD ASSUME OCCUPANCY. THE SAME OFFICIAL NOTED THAT RECOGNITION OF THE PRG HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION AND THAT IT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING "SOON". MEANWHILE, THE LOCAL PRESS HAS CARRIED A STEADY FLOW OF STORIES NOTING RECOGNITION OF THE PRG BY OTHER NATIONS, PRESUMABLY TO SHOW THAT ITS OWN FORTHCOMING RECOGNITION IS IN KEEPING WITH GENERAL PRACTICE AND NOT PRECIPITOUS. MEANWHILE, NEARLY A MONTH AFTER DECLARING ALLEGIANCE TO GRUNK, CAMBODIAN EMB PERSONNEL IN RANGOON STILL HAVE HAD NO COMMUNICATION FROM GRUNK. THEY ARE STILL BEING ACCORDED NORMAL PRIVILEGES BY GUB, AND ARE SEEKING ADMISSION TO AUSTRALIA. THEY REMAIN IN POSSESSION OF CAMBODIAN EMB, AND MFA OFFICIALS INDICATED IN VIEW OF THEIR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO NEW REGIME THEY WILL BE LEFT ALONE INDEFINITELY.

6. CYCLONE DAMAGE IN DELTA (UNCLAS)

CYCLONE WHICH TURNED INLAND MAY 7 CAUSED SERIOUS DAMAGE IN IRRAWADDY DELTA AND KILLED ESTIMATED 79 PERSONS, MOST OF THEN IN BASSEIN. GUB ESTIMATES 18 INJURED, 150,000 HOMELESS. SOME 80 VESSELS AND SMALL BOATS WERE SUNK OR BLOWN AGROUND BY WINDS REACHING 80 MPH. MANY GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE BUILDINGS WERE DAMAGED WITH ROOFS BLOWN OFF AND SOME PRISONERS APPARENTLY ESCAPED FROM BASSEIN JAIL WHEN A 200 FOOT SECTION OF WALL COLLAPSED. SENIOR GUB OFFICIALS HAVE VISITED AFFECTED AREAS, AND RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION WORK IS IN PROGRESS, WITH DEFENSE MINISTER GEN. TIN OO IN CHARGE (HE COMES FROM BASSEIN AND REPRESENTS TOWNSHIP IN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY).

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SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 CU-02 SAM-01 SAJ-01 AID-05 SCCT-01

EB-07 FEA-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGR-05 /110 W

----- 008827

R 140955Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9571
INFO CINCPAC
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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AMCONSUL UDORN BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RANGOON 1243

7. PETROLEUM: LETPANDO HOPES FADING? (LOU)

RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT TWO ADDITIONAL TEST WELLS DRILLED AT THE HIGHLY TOUTED LETPANDO FIELD (WEEK 10, ITEM 9) ONE ONLY A FEW HUNDRED FEET FROM THE INITIAL PRODUCING WELL, HAVE PROVED DRY OR SHOWN ONLY GAS TRACES. AS IS FREQUENTLY THE CASE IN BURMA, LETPANDO "FIELD" MAY CONSIST OF SMALL POCKETS OF PETROLEUM OF LIMITED COMMERCIAL VALUE. IF SO, GUB ASSERTIONS THAT LETPANDO, EVENTUALLY PRODUCING 10,000 BPD, WOULD MAKE BURMA SELF-SUFFICIENT IN PETROLEUM MAY BE PREMATURE AT BEST. IT WOULD ALSO UNDERMINE RECENT EFFORTS BY THE GUB TO WIN SIZEABLE SOMMERCIAL LOANS FROM EUROPEAN AND US BANKS FOR ONSHORE PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT (WEEK 16).
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8. PRODUCTION AND EXPORT VALUE OF TIMBER CLIMBS (UNCLAS)

VALUE OF TIMBER EXTRACTED FROM BURMA'S FORESTS IN FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1975 REACHED K410 (\$66) MILLION, HIGHEST FIGURE IN MANY YEARS. ACCORDING TO GUB TARGET, K440 (\$70) MILLION WORTH OF FOREST PRODUCTS ARE TO BE EXTRACTED DURING PRESENT FISCAL YEAR. EXPORTS OF TEAK AND HARDWOODS ALSO CLIMBED LAST YEAR TO K220 (\$35) MILLION, 15 MILLION ABOVE THE EARNINGS IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR. MAJOR BUYERS WERE JAPAN AND WEST EUROPE.

COMMENT: LOANS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM IDA AND ADB FOR BURMA'S TIMBER INDUSTRY ARE PRESENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED AS CAN-ADIAN AND DANISH EXPERTS HAVE RECENTLY ARRIVED IN PROME TO BEGIN WORK UNDER IDA PROGRAM. THIS ASSISTANCE MAY HELP INCREASE BURMA'S TIMBER PRODUCTION IN NEAR FUTURE. WORLD DEMAND FOR TEAK SEEMS TO BE HOLDING UP, AND DESPITE GOOD PADDY COLLECTIONS THIS YEAR,

TIMBER MAY RETAIN ITS POSITION AS BURMA'S PRIMARY FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER.

9. PRG MAKES CIVIL PROBLEMS FOR BURMA AIRWAYS (LOU)

BURMA AIRWAYS FLIGHTS FROM BANGKOK TO HONG KONG, SUSPENDED JUST PRIOR TO FALL OF SAIGON, WILL NOT BE RESUMED FOR SOME TIME. PRG INFORMED GUB THAT THE OLD AGREEMENT BY WHICH BAC CROSSED VIETNAM IS NO LONGER VALID AND MUST BE COMPLETELY RENEGOTIATED. PRG EMPHASIZED THAT GUB RECOGNITION WOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY ALLOW RESUMPTION OF FLIGHTS UNDER THE TERMS OF THE FORMER GUB-RVN AGREEMENT. BAC'S BOEING 727, DOES NOT CARRY ENOUGH FUEL TO FLY COMPLETELY AROUND VIETNAMESE AIR SPACE.

COMMENT: IN SPITE OF LOW PASSENGER LOADS ON THIS ROUTE IT WAS PROFITABLE BECAUSE OF LUCRATIVE AIR FREIGHT OPERATIONS. BAC FLEW FRESH VEGETABLES FROM BANGKOK TO HONG KONG AND ON RETURN CARRIED HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND CONSUMER GOODS, MAINLY DESTINED FOR KATHMANDU. BAC WILL MISS THIS HARD CURRENCY INCOME AND FIND ITSELF IN A STRANGE NEW POSITION - THAT OF NEGOTIATING AN AIR AGREEMENT FROM THE POSITION OF UNDERDOG. IT WILL MOST LIKELY BE THE BURMESE WHO WILL GO TO SAIGON AND ACCEPT PRG TERMS RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY AROUND. PESSIMISTS AT BAC ARE PREDICTING IT WILL BE AT LEAST A YEAR BEFORE THE FLIGHTS ARE RESUMED.

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Message Attributes

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